

Bulletin

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<https://tasfieldnats.org.au>

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we study natural history.

Timbs Track, Florentine Valley Excursion

Saturday 9th July, 2022

It was a wet, cool July morning but, as promised by Eddie and the weather forecast, the sun began to dominate the showers as the morning progressed. Fifteen Field Nats met at the Twisted Sister car park near the start of the Timbs track (Figure 1).



Field Nats at Twisted Sister Carpark (Fig 1)
Photo: Amanda Thomson

Liz Buchanan and I were missing. We had been thrown by the email directions which told us to go over the high pass between The Needles and Tim O'Shea (both

of which were invisible, shrouded in mist). Then, in the broad valley below, halfway along a particularly long straight, we would find the track signpost and parking on the righthand side. No track signpost!! No sign of any cars! No phone reception! So .. we continued on, searching for the elusive track signpost – all the way to Strathgordon! In the luxurious warmth of the Pedder Wilderness Lodge, the friendly French receptionist helped us find the rendezvous point on the map, 30 km back. Looking out on the lake and misty mountains, we decided it would be appropriate to sample from their extensive list of Tasmanian whisky. A beautifully smooth Shene and a woody Lark cheered us up and a Piccolo Latte sobered us enough and we set off back to find our friends, this time appreciating the stunning mountain scenery (Figure 2).



Lake Pedder (Fig 2)
Photo: Anna Kingston

In true Field Nats style they hadn't got far in the two hours we'd been MIA and we were relieved to find David Ratkowsky, removing his boots in the Twisted Sister carpark as we pulled in. David pointed us in the right direction to catch up with the others and we soon found Genevieve Gates returning. In a small area near the carpark, she introduced us to at least 5 species of fungi, including a group of *Multiclavula* I saw on a mossy log that she said was an exciting find (Figure 3).



Multiclavula (Fig 3)
Photo: Anna Kingston

Genevieve corrected our path yet again and we set off through the rainforest, stopping frequently to examine the many and varied species of fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens. The fungi were still colourful this late in the season but rather past their best, dripping with moisture and, well, decadent! (Figure 4)



Selection of fungi (Fig 4)
Photos: Anna Kingston

We breathed in the characteristic musky smell of the rainforest and enjoyed the patches of dappled sunlight coming through the *Nothofagus* and *Dickensonia* and

soon came to the Timbs Track signpost that had eluded us. Not on the roadside but in the middle of the forest! Next to it was a shiny new sign warning of various dangers, which must have been erected at the time of the recent Federal Election when there were Libs falling all over the place! (Figure 5)



Roadside sign – beware of falling Libs! (Fig 5)
Photo: Amanda Thomson

Now that we knew we were on the right track, we proceeded with both confidence and caution, watching our feet as the dilapidated boardwalks were more hazard than help. Liz noted that, apart from one particularly squelchy spot, they were mostly on relatively dry, flat spots, as if the rain preceding our visit was almost breaking a dryish winter. We were surprised at the absence of leeches, only spotting a single very small one on the ground.

It wasn't long before the track came out of the rainforest and into quite dense scrub dominated by *Bauera* and *Leptospermum* with *Gahnia* and other sedges lining the now quartz gravel track. We were surprised by the number of big wombat scats along the track, thinking they must have cast-iron stomachs if they were feeding on this tough vegetation. There were still patches of water to dodge but luckily the showers continued to hold off.

Soon we heard voices and were greeted by a group stopping for lunch on the way back down. Otto and Bruno Bell were munching on what looked just like a species of shelf fungus but turned out to be mini pizzas! They told us they'd found at least 10 different species of snails of interest including the rarely seen Needle snail (Figure 6).

We met the rest of the party as they were leaving their lunch spot at the ruins of the lookout platform at the top of the track before it descends to the Florentine River. Not wanting to be left behind again, we joined them to come back down, after briefly taking in the

view of the Needles and Tim O'Shea, still partly shrouded in cloud.



Needle snail (Fig 6)
Photo: Amanda Thomson

We were surrounded by the sounds of different species of birds calling. Els Wakefield had noted nine species including Bassian thrush, Grey Shrikethrush, Tas Thornbill, Pink Robin, Golden Whistler, Green Rosella, Crescent Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Honeyeater. A lively flock of Strong-billed Honeyeaters had been seen up close further up the track, and we all heard the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos calling as we headed back through the rainforest (Figure 7).



Strong-billed honeyeater (Fig 7)
Photo: Peter Crofts

We fossicked under bark, logs and soggy leaf litter finding springtails and harvestmen, beetles, and more minuscule snails. As the afternoon light began to fade, the red wax caps (*Hygrocybe*) glowed more intensely, and the blue of the Pixie Parasols (*Mycena interrupta*) appeared to become whiter and more luminous (Figure 8).

A few of us took the short loop track to pay our respects to the elder of the forest, the majestic Twisted Sister (*E. delegatensis*). Providing habitat for so many

creatures and plants, she seemed ready to extend her embrace to the human species too! (Figure 9)



Mycena interrupta (Fig 8)
Photo: Amanda Thomson

Assembling at 4:00 pm in the carpark to say goodbye as the Black Cockies called overhead, the remaining 12 Field Nats had one more huddle over an interesting find before heading home (Figure 10).

Anna Kingston



The Twisted Sister and Liz Buchanan (Fig 9)
Photo: Anna Kingston



Field Nats with *Lissotes* sp. (Fig 10)
Photos: Anna Kingston

Excursion to Mortimer Bay Track

3rd September 2022

The September excursion had a disjointed start. On the way, I (Eddie) stopped at a café in Lauderdale. With coffee in hand, I returned to the car and the car ignition failed to turn over. After a bit of a frustrating `delay, it turned out to be nothing more than a loose connection on the battery.



Mortimer Bay and Gorrings Beach
Photo: Kieran Nixon

Before long, we had caught up with the rest of the excursion in the open area behind Gorrings Beach (Mortimer Bay). The vegetation was dominated by sags (*Lomandra longifolia*), bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) and tussock grasses (*Poa* spp.). Heath species included bearded heaths (*Leucopogon*

spp.), pigface (*Carpobrotus rossi*) and the golden pea (*Aotus ericoides*). In the swampy open area, there were a lot of the bright yellow-orange fungi *Lichenomphalia chromacea* and occasional brown *Coltricia* sp. Surrounding the open area were black gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*). Most of the forest was a mixture of manna gums (*E. viminalis*) and black peppermints (*E. amygdalina*) and an understory dominated by bracken and a variety of brightly flowering wattles, including silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), coast wattle (*A. longifolia*), blackwood (*A. melanoxylon*), black wattle (*A. mearnsii*), and prickly mimosa (*A. verticillata*). Quite a few of us spent some time pulling out the invasive heath (*Erica lusitanica*), something that seems to happen more and more often on our excursions.

Yellow tailed black cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*), green rosellas (*Platycercus caledonicus*), forest ravens (*Corvus tasmanicus*), magpies (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) and a brown falcon (*Falco berigora*) flew overhead. In the nearby trees, scarlet robins (*Petroica boodang*), Noisy miners (*Manorina melanocephala*), pardalotes (*Pardalotus punctatus* and *P. striata*) and grey fantails (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) flitted between the branches.



Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*)
Photo: Peter Crofts

We regrouped at the carpark and then walked south along the Mortimer Bay Track. It goes through a narrow coastal reserve, sandwiched between 5-acre blocks and Ralphs Bay. The vegetation is dominated by drooping sheoak

(*Allocasurina verticillata*) and broadleaf hobbush (*Dodonea viscosa*) with some spike beardheath (*Leucopogon australis*). Coastal birds included pied oystercatchers (*Haematopus longirostris*) and kelp gulls (*Larus dominicanus*).



Field Nats regrouping at the carpark
Photo: Eddie Gall

The track traverses nearly all the way on continuous middens, showing thousands of years of occupation by the Moomairemener. Most of the surviving material in the middens is oyster shells but there was an occasional marsupial bone. The group had a sunny lunch looking out over Ralphs Bay and South Arm, enjoying eating where untold generations had before us.



Lunch-time on midden
Photo: Eddie Gall

The rock on the foreshore was Permian sandstone/siltstone formed in a cold sea from glaciomarine deposits. It included lonestones, likely dropped from icebergs floating overhead during deposition.



Lonestones in siltstone
Photo: Eddie Gall

From the lunch spot, we split into three groups: some had left a car at Goats Bluff and decided to walk through; some decided to return to their cars; and some decided to walk further and return to the cars via Gellibrand Ave, creating a loop.

The vegetation where we first joined Gellibrand Ave was silver peppermint (*E. tenuiramis*) woodland that was relatively undisturbed. This was reflected in the native snails. Closer to the coast the only native snails seen were some *Paralaoma hobarti* at the lunch site and some very long dead *Caryodes dufresnii*. Introduced species were common: *Oxychilus alliarius*, *O. draparnaudi*, *Candidula intersecta*, *Prietocella barbara* and the slugs *Arion intermedius*, *Deroceras reticulatum* and *D. invadens*. At Gellibrand Ave, there were no introduced *Oxychilus* snails (which prey on some groups of native snails). There were four native species - *Caryodes dufresnii*, *Tasmaphena ruga*, *Helicarion cuvieri* (surprisingly a new record for the South Arm mainland) and one specimen of a strange *Paralaoma*-like punctid that has yet to be identified.

Walking along the road reserve of Gellibrand Ave, the number of orchids became the highlight of the excursion. To quote, "There are more orchids than

you could poke a stick at!”. Orchid species included the small gnat orchid (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*), mayfly orchid (*Acianthus caudatus*), small mosquito orchid (*A. pusillus*) leopard orchid (*Diuris pardina*), brown-lip greenhood (*Pterostylis williamsonii*), and black-striped greenhood (*P. melagramma*). A particularly dense flowering colony of nodding greenhoods (*P. nutans*) gave rise to a new collective term: an agreement of noddies! The leaves of other orchids were emerging: onion orchids (*Microtis spp.*), sun orchids (*Thelymitra spp.*), and spider orchids (*Caladenia spp.*).



Pimelia linifolia
Photo: Annabel Carle

It had been a successful sunny spring day and records of many of the species found can be seen on iNaturalist <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/tas-field-nats-2022-sept-mortimer-bay-track> .

Eddie Gall

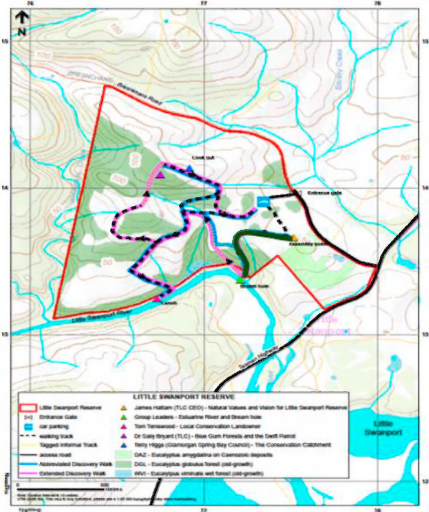
Excursion to Little Swanport

October 2022

The month's outing was a well-anticipated one to a property within Little Swanport. This 150-acre reserve, purchased by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) in 2019, sits next to the Little Swanport river. The reserve is dominated by old-growth *Eucalyptus globulus* and *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forests, *Callistris* and *Pomaderris* (Dogwood) gullies, drier areas of *Eucalyptus pulchella* and regenerating *Acacia mearnsii* fields from past grazing.



Filed Nats at Litte Swanport
Photo: Amanda Thomson



Map of the TLC Little Swanport property.
The green line represents the main route taken on the outing

At 10 AM we all met at a car park, on the northern side of the property. After a briefing from the property ranger, Aimee Bliss - about the history and importance of the area - we set off. The car park area, which had previously been a quarry was dry and sparsely vegetated with *Eucalyptus pulchella*. Not much was found here given the area's past disturbance. However out of the car park was a rich array of flora, including small ground cover wildflowers, grasses, old Blue gums, and flowering wattles which most of the group spent a considerable time at. The multitude of fallen logs, leaf litter and rocks also yielded a great variety of invertebrates, including the small, but decorative weevil, *Decilaus bryophilus*.

Kevin, Bruno and Simon headed off separately further south, to the banks of the Little Swanport River. Simon looked in dry Acacia forests, and found an interesting hover fly (*Odyneromyia spadix*) which had previously only been recorded from rainforest. Kevin and Bruno looked along damp gullies on the bank of the river for small land snails.



Epacris cerasicollina (dolerite heath)
Photo: Eddie Gall

The route through the property connected the dry eucalypt forests at the beginning to open poorly drained *Acacia mearnsii* woodland, which after the heavy rains, was pretty damp under foot. This was an interesting area for rushes and grasses, where Otto found the first alive individual of the land snail *Tasmathera* sp. "Windsong", which had last been seen in 2017 (much to the delight of Kevin, Bruno and Otto).



Tasmathera sp. "Windsong" (Left), *Bonhamaropa* sp. nov. "Little Windsong" (right)
Photos: Bruno Bell (L), Kevin Bonham (R)

The path then dipped into a small gully dominated by *Acacia verticulatta*, before opening up to the banks of the Little Swanport River. Here the group decided to have lunch, precariously on top of the rocks. There was an array of interesting flora, including *Micrantherum hexandrum* (river tridentbush), *Pimelea curviflora* (slender curved riceflower), *Spyridium obovatum* (smooth dustmiller) and *Epacis cerasicollina* (dolerite heath), which is found only from Orford to Seymour. Meanwhile Bruno and Kevin were deep in the wet gullies, further along the river bank, uncovering a total of 15 species, including one (a *Bonhamaropa*) which later turned out to be a completely new species.



Lunch on the banks of the Little Swanport River
Photo: Eddie Gall

After ambling back to the cars from the Little Swanport River, the group congregated at the carpark and shared and identified the finds of the trip in the warm afternoon sun.

Bruno Bell

How to win Fronds and Influence People: A talk about tree ferns in Australian forests.

Speakers: Dr Shavawn Donoghue and Dr Perpetua Turner.

Thursday 1st September 2022

Reference: "A review of Australian tree fern ecology in forest communities." *Austral Ecology* (2021)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354781819_A_review_of_Australian_tree_fern_ecology_in_forest_communities

Shavawn and Perpetua gave presentation at our general meeting on their 2021 review of Australian tree fern literature.

Their introduction covered how tree ferns have been found in the fossil record back to the late Jurassic era, followed by an explanation of the various tree fern species, their habitats and their world-wide and Australian geographical distribution. Tree ferns are found in all states and territories of Australia except NT. None are listed as threatened under federal environmental law, but Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania all have species listed as threatened under state legislation. Here in Tasmania *Dicksonia cunninghamii* is listed as threatened and *D. x marcescens* is listed as vulnerable.

Most studies conducted to date have been a direct result of legislation requirements in the Tasmanian, Victorian and NSW forestry and horticultural industries, focusing on tree fern responses to wildfire, clear-fell burn and sowing logging practices. But the review found few studies had been completed on:

- spore distribution, germination,
- survival and recruitment following drought,
- multiple disturbance events such as repeated logging
- forestry industry techniques other than clear-fell burn and sowing.

Whilst tree fern trunks are known to perform a keystone function on a local scale as habitat for epiphytes (mainly ferns and bryophytes), very little literature could be found detailing their impact on biodiversity at the landscape scale.

And no short- or long-term studies were found covering:

- how tree ferns respond to changing climate,
- effects of invasive fauna species in Australia (in New Zealand brush-tailed possums, rats, mice and red deer are known to graze tree ferns)
- changes in fire frequency or effect of megafire on tree fern populations.

Approximately 75% of the Australian tree fern literature is not easily sourced and, of this, 39% are included as part of "grey literature" i.e. university theses (that remain unpublished); public sector reports and institute collections etc. In addition, most Australian tree fern studies are centered in the temperate forests of Tasmania and Victoria - mainly in response to these state's requirement for research and monitoring of the management of tree fern harvesting for the horticultural industry.

The speakers recommended that the key areas for future tree fern research funding should include climate change, ecological studies of tree ferns including their influence on forests, the impacts of silvicultural techniques and the influence of megafires on their survival.

INTERESTING *Dicksonia antarctica* FACTS:

- when compared with all tree fern species, is thought to have the largest distribution with a population estimated as 130 million stems in Tasmania alone.
- short term field studies indicate:
 - it has a highly variable growth rate of 5-88mm pa
 - *Cyathea australis* grows between 2.2 and four times faster.

Annabel Carle

Using Marine Predators to study Southern Ocean Ecosystems

Speaker: Dr David Green (Institute of Marine Antarctic Science)

Thursday 7th October

David began by saying the Southern Oceans are a huge area to monitor with large physical variation ranging from the surface waters and down to depths of 2000m., making it difficult to see the full picture. Human pressures are creating changes in the

biophysical environments, species distributions and population trajectories of the Southern Oceans and marine scientists are using some amazing methods to approach this vast and complex whole-of-ecosystem research.

Although this talk was advertised as using seals to study these ecosystems, David broadened it to the term 'Marine Predators' to include whales, penguins, and seabirds including albatross. These predators are at, or near, the top of the marine food webs and have a cosmopolitan distribution around the southern Antarctic oceans so their distribution and foraging behavior provides a raft of information and insights on the distribution and dynamics of lower trophic levels.

Marine predators are large enough to be fitted with suitable sized data loggers/biotelemetry devices, as a rule-of-thumb of no more than 3% of the animal's body weight. As their use becomes more common, the devices come in increasing shapes, sizes and technologies – some capable of sending information but others needed to be retrieved to download the data. Fortunately for researchers, many predators, return to a the same site, particularly in the breeding season, enabling measurements to be taken regularly/repeatedly and the data bio-loggers to be retrieved (mostly!)



Leopard Seal at Seven Mile Beach
Photo: Els Wakefield

Large data sets are now available to study animal movements in the Southern Oceans and are being shared between scientists and these in turn can be studied at the large-, meso- and fine- scales.

The tracks of different species can be combined to identify large-scale regions of ecological significance and thus help to define regional bioregions.

Tracks at the meso-scale can help identify spatial processes that affect the distribution of prey. Whilst the fine-scale can give us individual prey types, abundance, size and distribution and the predator /prey interactions. David was able to show us fascinating short video clips of the predator/prey interactions including one between macaroni penguin and a squid. The penguin won!

The meeting concluded with a lively question time and it was agreed that the use of Marine Predators in the Southern Oceans was a fascinating research tool.

Annabel Carle

Club news

'Between the Tasmanian Tidelines – A Field Guide'

At the October committee meeting it was agreed that we would print a new edition of the useful 'Between Tasmanian Tidelines' book containing the black and white line drawings of the common plants and animals seen between the high and low tide lines (i.e. the intertidal zone.)

This book was first published in 1999 by the *Tasmanian Marine Naturalists Association*. In 2010 The Marine Naturalists wound up and TFNC took over these book sales. This will be the 4th edition, which has always been a slow, but very steady seller. We are grateful to Dr Simon Grove who has updated the animal species nomenclature in this book and to Dr Fiona Scott who updated the seaweeds names.

The original pdf could not be found and the book had to be scanned, and some images need reformatting. If we can, this will be available in time for the Christmas market, but the timeline is tight. This book will retain its current format with splash proof paper, but with an updated front cover. It's a great book for anyone to use as an introduction to what can be found on the beach! Try it this summer!

In August we were grateful to the family of the late **Rhoda Leslie** who was a member of Marine Naturalist Association for the donation of some their club records. These are currently being sorted and catalogued and will to put into the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage

Office (TAHO.) Rhona Leslie was also a contributor to the 'Between Tasmanian Tidelines' book and it seems fitting that her contribution to this publication will continue posthumously in this 4th edition.

The 2023 Committee – we will need a President, Vice President and Treasurer or Secretary!

In March 2023, after five years on our Committee as Treasurer, Jane Catchpole is stepping down to do some travelling. We will be thanking her (and Peter Croft) at the AGM, for their quiet and efficient contribution to the club over these years.

Eddie Gall after two years, is stepping down as our President, although he will stay on the committee.

Anna McEldowney will revert to a general committee person responsible for book sales.

Please —if you have previous committee/organisational experience your club needs **YOU!** Please think about it and discuss with one of the existing committee members! We do have more than enough members ready to stand for the four 2023-24 general committee positions, but not enough for the Executive! Lynne Maher is offering to nominate as Treasurer, but that will then require us to find a new Secretary!

Our Library?

Are you wondering what is happening to our Library and Archives Cupboard in the UTAS Life Sciences building? It is still there and quite safe. The Committee has considered what to do with this several times this year, but we keep hoping that we may get better access to it or even be able to move it. Sadly, it is still in our too hard basket, but a decision does need to be made in the next few months.

Saturday November 5th – Excursion to Mountain River

See <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/> for details.

Please note that the starting time is 10:00am.

Kelsey Aves Photos 1959 – 1969

Some of you will remember at the June General meeting we showed some of these photographs asking for assistance with some location IDs. Thanks to Qug

and Janet and Geoff Fenton we were put in touch with Peter Marmion (some will remember him from our November 2020 Growling Swallet excursion), who was most helpful. We also sought assistance from the Forestier Peninsula and Glamorgan-Spring Bay Historical Societies; the Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania; 'Tasmanian History' Facebook site where members were so helpful as were the members of the 'Churches of Tasmania' Facebook site! We spent an afternoon with Rod Hewer (who featured as a teenager in some of these photos) who solved some of the identities of the people in them. Our thanks go to them all.

(Memory note to us all! Please label and name your digital photos NOW before it's too late!)

By Christmas, with the assistance of our Website Editor, Deirdre Brown, we intend to get a large selection of these photos onto our website alongside those of Alan Hewer (Rod Hewer's Dad). We will let you know when they are available to view!

Annabel Carle is intending to show a selection of these photos at Members' night in December, especially those that stubbornly resisted identification, but then we had a few 'Eureka moments' over the last few months! However, please can anyone help solve these final two locations?

Please email Annabel gacarle@ozemail.com.au if you can help!



Where is this monument? We suspect on the Tasman Peninsula somewhere? Maybe Safety Cove in 1956? Michael Sharland is in the trilby and brown jacket and Gillian Aves in the orange jumper.



Anyone remember this workers' shed/old tram? Maybe in the Eaglehawk Neck area. We do know the man in the hat and carrying the briefcase/suitcase and wearing a raincoat is Wilfred Hewer (Rod Hewer's uncle) which dates this photo to about 1957

What did we find on an Excursion?

Are you interested to look at what observations were made on one of our excursions (but not necessarily want to submit any observations of your own?) It's easy to do!

1. Log into iNaturalist <https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/> on your laptop, tablet or mobile phone. This requires your email address and the creation of a password.
 2. Select 'Projects' tab or if on a laptop select the 'Community' then the 'Projects' tab
 3. Search for the Umbrella project called 'Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club' and select the 'Join' button.
- this should bring up a list of our excursions; click on the one(s) you want to see.
* You may need to 'join' each separately.
 - Images of the species found on that excursion will appear.
 - Depending on whether you are on the laptop or mobile phone these can be selected in list form or as a grid.
 - It is then possible to limit the search in the Search bar to certain groups such as Plantae (Plants) or certain species etc.

Perhaps you will see something that you can identify! If so, Clare Hawkins' **Step by step guide to the use of iNaturalist for laptop, Mobile phone** (iPhone or Android) can be found here.

<https://tasfieldnats.org.au/data/documents/iNat-for-Field-Nats-Sept20.pdf>

Speakers and Excursions

Do you want to know what speakers and excursions we have planned? They are on our website

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>

If you want to volunteer for a 10 minute talk at Members night on 1st December, please email Eddie our TFNC President president@tasfieldnats.org.au

Please don't forget to bring your bathers for the Randalls Bay Annual Christmas BBQ on Saturday 3 December! (Let's hope for better weather than in 2021!)

Thursday November 3rd – General Meeting – 7:30pm

John Gooderham of the Waterbug Company will present "The Rivers of Southern Tasmania – a Guide to Macro-tourism and Waterbug Watching".